REMARKS

With the entry of the present amendments, claims 1 through 16 are pending in the application. Claims 17-31 have been withdrawn. Claims 1 and 11 have been amended. Support for the amendments in the claims may be found throughout the specification as filed.

In view of the following remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections to the application in the Office Action is respectfully requested.

ELECTIONS/RESTRICTION

In the Office Action, the Examiner required that Applicants affirm the provisional election that had previously been made to prosecute the invention of Group I (claims 1-16) without traverse. In accordance with the Examiner's requirement, Applicants hereby affirm the election to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1 through 16 without traverse. All of the inventors as originally listed in the application are inventors as relate to claims 1 through 16. No modification is necessary.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 USC §102(b) AND 103(a)

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-4, 5-8, 10-12, 14 and 16 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Heddon as evidenced by Suiter and *Hawley's Condensed Chemical Dictionary*. The Examiner further rejected claims 1-2, 6-7, 9, 11 and 14 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Helf. The Examiner also rejected claim 9 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Heddon in view of Suiter and as evidenced by *Hawley's Condensed Chemical Dictionary*. Further, the Examiner rejected claims 13 and 15 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Heddon as evidenced by Suiter and *Hawley's Condensed Chemical Dictionary* and in view of Kumar, et al. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's assessment regarding the patentability of the rejected claims in view of Heddon, et al., Suiter, Helf, Kumar, et al., or *Hawley's Condensed Chemical Dictionary* alone or in combination.

The currently pending claims are directed to a surface finish comprising a flexible film at least partially covering a surface and a cured coating disposed over at least a portion of the film. Cured coatings are described in the specification as coatings that are formed by the evaporation of a solvent and the coalescence of the solid film without crosslinking (i.e., "evaporatively-cured" coatings) and coatings that are formed by crosslinking reactions. The flexible film can be removed from the surface by peeling without the use of stripping agents. Further, the surface finish exhibits a coefficient of friction as measured by ASTMD-2047 of at least 0.6.

The Heddon reference is directed to a bowling lane and method for constructing the same. The bowling lane includes a plurality of synthetic panels having a tab and a notch cut formed along the side surface. The synthetic panels are attached to a bowling lane substructure

with screws. Flat dowels are placed over the screws to provide a smooth bowling lane surface. Panels are juxtaposed so that the tab of one panel fits into the notch of another panel. One side of a plastic film is attached to the juxtaposed panel with a contact adhesive. A finishing coat or lane finish material is applied to the other side of the film to provide a sliding surface. Examples of lane finishes include HONOR ROLL, U300, a top coat of urethane with a slip agent such as silicone glyceride or epoxies with good plastic film adhesive characteristics." (Column 6, lines 29-35.

The film functions as a barrier layer between the finish coat and the panel's top surface so that the bowling lane may be refinished by the peeling of the film from the lane. Once the film barrier 32 has been removed, the adhesive 34 may easily be cleaned from the surface with known adhesive removing solvents. The thickness of the film, as referred to by reference to the Suiter patents, is from 3 to 20 mils.

The Suiter reference was relied on by the Examiner for its teaching of film thicknesses of 3 to 20 mils and as identified by the Examiner for 3 to 10 mils for most of the bowling lane surfaces. Further, the Suiter reference requires utilization of "an appropriate solvent if patches of adhesive are stuck to the wood." See column 4, lines 26-28. *Hawley's Condensed Chemical Dictionary* was relied on by the Examiner for its teaching of some curable coatings. Clearly, the present invention is not anticipated by the Heddon reference as evidenced by Suiter and *Hawley's Condensed Chemical Dictionary*. The Heddon and Suiter references as applied refer to bowling lanes. An analysis of the US Bowling Congress Website provides the accepted specifications for a bowling lane. (A copy of the relevant portions of which are enclosed and highlighted and marked for ease of reference.) According to these specifications, the coefficient of friction shall not exceed .29. (emphasis added.) This clearly differs from the

present invention which requires a coefficient of friction of at least 0.6. Further, contrary to the Examiner's position, the Heddon reference requires the use of stripping agents along with peeling to remove the film and finish coat components. At column 6, lines 50-52, Heddon indicates that "once the film barrier 32 has been removed, the adhesive 34 may easily be removed from the surface with known adhesive removing solvents." (emphasis added). Clearly, this requires the use of some type of stripper/solvent for complete removal of the film components. This is contrary to the present invention which is removable from the surface by peeling without the use of stripping agents. The Suiter reference provides no assistance in overcoming this deficiency of Heddon in that Suiter also requires utilization of "an appropriate solvent" for adhesive stuck to the wood. See column 4, lines 26-28 Thus, the present invention is neither anticipated or rendered obvious by Heddon, Suiter or *Hawley's Condensed Chemical Dictionary* alone or in combination.

With regard to the Examiner's rejections based on Helf, Helf does not teach or anticipate the present invention. Helf is directed to an indicia containing surface coating composite for application to a substrate such as a floor. The composite comprises a layer of indicia having a layer of pressure sensitive adhesive on one side thereof. The pressure sensitive adhesive layer secures the indicia to the floor. To remove the polymeric layer 18 of the Helf reference, one would use "any one of a wide variety of commercially available base-containing solutions." See column 7, lines 4-10. For example, one might choose to apply an aqueous ammonia solution on the surface of the polymeric layer in an amount sufficient to dissolve the polymeric layer. Thus, a stripping agent is required to remove the composite of the Helf patent.

Conversely, the present invention does not require the use of stripping agents to remove the inventive surface finish. Rather, the surface finish including the film are removed by peeling. Utilization of additional stripping composition is not required by the present invention.

With regard to the §103(a) rejection based on Heddon in view of Suiter and as evidenced by *Hawley's Condensed Chemical Dictionary*, or alternatively, Heddon as evidenced by Suiter and *Hawley's Condensed Chemical Dictionary* and in view of Kumar, et al., as previously indicated, the present invention is neither taught, suggested, or rendered obvious by the references. As previously discussed, both the Heddon and Suiter patents are directed to bowling alley or lane surfaces which would require a slip coefficient of friction of no more than .29. Additionally, the Suiter and Heddon references require the use of a solvent or other "stripping agent" to remove the disclosed composite. The *Hawley* reference is directed to some curable coatings.

The Kumar, et al. reference is directed to a fast drying ambient temperature curable coating composition comprising epoxy resin. The coatings may be baked at high temperature to accelerate the cure rate. The coatings may be useful on bowling alley lanes and have improved solvent resistance. However, as is previously discussed for use on bowling lanes, the coefficient of friction of all lane surfaces should not exceed .29 according to the USBC regulations.

Conversely, the present invention is directed to a surface finish which among other things requires that the slip coefficient of friction be at least 0.6. Further, no stripping agent is required to remove the surface finish. Rather, peeling is the only means of removing the surface finish and the attendant coating attached thereto. Clearly, the present invention is in no way taught, suggested, or rendered obvious by Heddon, Suiter, *Hawley's Condensed Chemical Dictionary* or Kumar, et al. alone or in combination.

In view of the foregoing remarks, and the enclosed amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims remaining in the application are in condition for allowance and favorable action thereon is respectfully requested. If Examiner Bissett has any questions, or believes a telephone discussion would expedite prosecution, Examiner Bissett is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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